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Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 CU-04 NEA-10 INT-08 SCEM-02 SCI-06

TRSE-00 EB-11 AID-20 DRC-01 /180 W
---------- 109160
P R 281140Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9354
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL CHIANG MA
AMOONSUL UDORN
:DIA
DEA HQS
CINCPAC
USSAG NKP
13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 20029

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS* PGOV, PINT, TH
SUBJECT: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH
DECEMBER 28

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REF: A) BANGKOK 19786 B) BANGKOK 19978

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SUMMARY: THE SANYA GOVERNMENT ASSERTED ITSELF AND ASSUMED EMERGENCY POWERS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION TO DEAL WITH THE IMPACT OF THE OIL SHORTAGE. VARIOUS CONSERVATION MEASURES WILL EMERGE FROM THIS STEP. THE KING PRESIDED OVER THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE NEWLY APPOINTED NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WHICH LATER ELECTED ITS SPEAKER DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER, SENI PRAMOTE, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZERS DURING THE PAST WEEKS, ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN AS FUTURE PRIME MINISTER. VARIOUS STUDENT GROUPS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR METTLE ON ECONOMIC AND CAMPUS ISSUES. THE DEFENSE MINISTER ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR A UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE AND AMNESTY WITH THE COMMUNIST INSURGENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SANYA GOVERNMENT HAS ASSUMED EMERGENCY POWERS TO DEAL WITH THE OIL SHORTAGE UNDER ARTICLE 15 OF THE 1972 (REF B) INTERIM CONSTITUTION. THE PRIME MINISTER APPOINTED THE INDUSTRY MINISTER, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE ELECTRICAL GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (EGAT), AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO A BOARD WHICH WILL DESIGN AND OVERSEE VARIOUS CONSERVATION MEASURES. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED SHORTER BUSINESS HOURS FOR PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT SPOTS COME THE NEW YEAR. EGAT HAS REDUCED VOLTAGE AROUND BANGKOK AND TURNED OFF SOME LIGHTS. PRIVATE BUSINESSES ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW SUIT. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT THE ROYAL STATE RAILWAY IS DUSTING OFF ITS STEAM ENGINES AND RETURNING THEM TO SERVICE. THE ASSUMPTION OF EMERGENCY POWERS GOES FAR IN CONVINCING THE PUBLIC THAT BOTH THE SITUATION AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE SERIOUS.

2. THE KING PRESIDED OVER THE OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE NEWLY APPOINTED NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) DECEMBER 28. THE PALACE ISSUED THE FORMAL LIST OF THE 299 NLA MEMBERS, DROPPING THE NAMES OF THE UNDER AGED WINNERS AND THUS AVOIDING CONTROVERSY (BANGKOK 19821). THE PRESS CARRIED CONSILIATORY QUOTES FROM THE THREE DROPPED NOMINEES TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY WERE PLEASED TO RECEIVE SO MANY VOTES BUT WOULD BOW TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS.
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IN AN AFTERNOON SESSION DECEMBER 28, THE NLA ELECTED M.R. KUKRIT PRAMOJ AS ITS SPEAKER AND GENERAL SAMRAN PHAETAYAKUL AS THE FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER.

3. DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE BANGKOK BANK AND DEAN OF THE ECONOMICS FACULTY AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY, IS A POPULAR FAVORITE FOR FUTURE PRIME MINISTER. DESPITE HIS DENIALS OF POLITICAL AMBITION, MAJOR POLITICAL GROUP-

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INGS HINT THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT PUEY FOR PRIME MINISTER.
SENI PRAMOTE, LEADER IN THE DISARRAYED DEMOCRATIC PARTY,
WAS THE LATEST TO JOIN THE BANDWAGON. IN A RECENT PRESS
INTERVIEW SENI ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
SHOULD CHANGE TO A MORE LIBERAL IMAGE, MAKING CLEAR ITS
DESIRE FOR "SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE."

4. DEFENSE MINISTER, AIR CHIEF MARSHAL DAWEE CHULLASAPYA,
PROPOSED A ONE MONTH CEASEFIRE TO THE COMMUNIST
TERRORISTS IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO
SURRENDER TO THE GOVERNMENT. AN AMNESTY IS ALSO PART
OF THE DEAL. THE COMMUNIST SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS
COMMAND IS PRESENTLY WORKING OUT THE DETAILS OF THE
UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE WHICH IS CONTEMPLATED FOR EARLY
1974. WHILE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY RANKING DEFECTIONS
WILL OCCUR, THE RTG APPARENTLY FEELS THAT POLITICAL GAINS
CAN BE MADE IN TAKING THE INITIATIVE (SEPTEL). THE PRESS
HAS RECENTLY GIVEN PLAY TO INTERVIEWS WITH MUSLIM DISSIDENT
LEADER, POR SU, SUGGESTING THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT AN
AMNESTY OFFER. THIS INITIATIVE ALSO REFLECTS THINKING
IN GOVERNMENT AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES THAT INEPT GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS AND GENERALLY POOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH
THE POPULATION HAVE CAUSED THE INSURGENCY.

5. THE STUDENT MOVEMENT INVOLVED ITSELF IN A NUMBER
OF ECONOMIC ISSUES THIS PAST WEEK. JUST BEFORE THE
GOVERNMENT FORMALLY ANNOUNCED IT HAD ASSUMED EMERGENCY
POWERS, THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT)
ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE WHICH STATED THAT IT WOULD SEND A
LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER WITH SUGGESTIONS ON CONSERV-
ING OIL. FIVE MAJOR STUDENT GROUPS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED
THAT THEY OPPOSE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT AT NONG NGU HAO AS PROPOSED BY THE NORTHROP
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COMPANY. TH* STUDENT AND SOME PUBLIC SECTORS WANT THE
PROJECT DEBATED IN THE NLA. THE STUDENTS BACKED UP
THEIR OPPOSITION WITH THE THREAT TO RELEASE THE*NAMES
OF INDIVIDUALS WHO, THEY CLAIM, STA*D TO MAK* INORDINATE GAINS *F
THE*PROJECT GOES*THROUGH./

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 CU-04 NEA-10 INT-08 SCEM-02 SCI-06

TRSE-00 EB-11 AID-20 /179 W
---------- 109484
P R 281140Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9355
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
JYMJMA/AMEMBASSY MANILA 8341
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
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CINCPAC
USSAG NKP
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 20029

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. VARIOUS STUDENT GROUPS HAVE RECENTLY PRESSED FOR
EDUCATIONAL REFORM. STUDENTS AT RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY
OCCUPIED THE STATE UNIVERSITY DEGEAU
(SUB) AND THE NEARBY
COOPERATIVES PROMOTION, LAND DEVELOPMENT, AND AGRICULTURAL
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COOPERATIVES DEPARTMENTS. THEY DEMANDED THAT THE SUB
FULFILL ITS EARLIER PROMISES TO ESTABLISH A SCIENCE
FACILITY AT
RAMKHAMHAENG, THE NEWEST UNIVERSITY. APPARENTLY

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RAMKHAMHAENG ENROLLED STUDENTS WITH THE EXPECTATION THIS YEAR THAT THE NEW FACULTY WOULD BE APPROVED. THE DEMONSTRATIONS SWELLED TO 3,000 OVER A THREE DAY PERIOD AND FINALLY DISPERSED AFTER ANOTHER SUB PROMISE THAT THE FACULTY WOULD BE ESTABLISHED. POLITICAL SCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENTS AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY HAVE PROTESTED THE COMPARATIVELY HIGH CREDIT HOUR FEES THEY PAY. CHULALONGKORN PHARMACY STUDENTS' CLASS BOYCOTT SEEKING THE RESIGNATION OF THEIR DEAN RECEIVED ADDED SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCIL.

7. CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY AS ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CHULALONGKORN PROPERTY BUREAU, IS IN A DISPUTENYITH ITS 5028 TENANTS. THE TENANTS CHARGE THAT RENTAL FEES AND "KICK BACKS" ARE TOO HIGH. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE STALEMATED AND THE UNIVERSITY HAS CANCELLED NIGHT CLASSES AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST VIOLENCE. THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCIL IS FALLING BEHIND THE UNIVERSITY ADMINVYSTRATORS. THE TENANTS STAGED TWO DAYS OF PROTESTS IN FRONT OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND FINALLY DISPERSED AFTER SENDING A PETITION TO THE KING. IN THE PAST CHULALONGKORN STUDENTS HAVE EXPOSED SCANDALS INVOLVING THE UNIVERSITY PROPERTIES. THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE AND CLOSING OF THE NIGHT CLASS HAS PLACED THE STUDENTS ON THE "ESTABLISHMENT'S" SIDE IN THIS DISPUTE.

8. COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN FLEW FROM GERMANY, BUT FAILING TO GAIN ENTRANCE TO JAPAN, FINALLY LANDED IN KOREA. INTERVIEWED AT THE SEOUL AIRPORT, NARONG SAID THAT HE IS TRYING TO SEEK ASYLUM IN PORTUGAL OR SWITZERLAND. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO DOMESTIC RESPONSE TO NARONG'S ODYSSEY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTION, PETROLEUM, SUPPLIES, ARMISTICE, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, CONSERVATION, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, MEET INGS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CANDIDATES, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, EDUCATIO NAL REFORMS, COMMUNISTS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL LEADERS, STUDENT GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO20029
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973124/aaaaacks.tel
Line Count: 256
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) BANGKOK 19786 B) BANGKOK 19978
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Oct-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH DECEMBER 28
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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